(d) the time by which the report of the panel is likely to be made available and pending/submission of report, financial relief sought by the Railways to overcome resource crunch is extended?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) and (b). As per the decision taken by the Cabinet on 13.8.96 the matter about recovery of outstanding dues of Railways from NTPC, DESU and Other SEBs has been referred to Committee of Secretaries for working out the modalities to recover the old oustanding dues. This report has not been received.

The back-log of outstandings accummulated over the last three years is as under :

(Figs. in crores)

Year	NTPC	DESU	Other SEBs	Total
1.4.94	499.18	67.07	348.04	914.29
1.4.95	554.47	79.37	197.25	831.09
1.4.96	675.88	97.94	121.03	894.85

(c) Yes, Sir. Regular efforts were made by Chairman, Railway Board/Minister for Railways who took the matter with Ministry of Finance, Power, Home and Chief Minister of Delhi. Ministry of Railways proposed that (i) In order to stop fresh accrual, movement of coal to Power Houses of all SEBs including BTPS and DESU be permitted only on pre-payment of freight; (ii) For clearing past oustanding dues, it was suggested that certain amounts be adjusted from the budgetory support given to the Ministry of Power and to the Government of Delhi. The alternative of setting off the dividend payable by Railways to the general revenue against the dues from BTPS and DESU, was also suggested.

As a result of efforts made by the Ministry of Railways, the matter was discussed in the Meeting of Cabinet held on 13.8.96. The following decisions were taken in this Meeting :

(i) The Cabinet approve, in principle, the proposal that coal may be transported to Power Houses by the Railways only on pre-payment of freight and decided that this may be implemented w.e.f. Ist Oct., 1996.

(ii) The issue regarding the outstanding freight charges be referred to the Committee of Secretaries to examine the manner in which the dues could be liquidated.

As regards Item (i) above, the scheme of pre-payment for carriage of coal consignments to all Power Houses has been imposed w.e.f. 1.10.96. But this decision has been deferred in case of Badarpur Thermal Power Station of NTPC temporarily for a period upto 31.12.96.

As regards decision of the Cabinet at Item (ii) above, the matter has been referred to the Committee of Secretaries for study.

(d) Ministry of Railways is not aware of constitution of such panel.

[Translation]

Post Offices in U.P.

4125. SHRI BACHI SINGH RAWAT "BACHDA" : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of branch post offices, sub post offices and extradepartmental post offices sanctioned during each of the last three years in the hilly regions of Almora, Pithoragarh, Uttar Pradesh, location-wise;

(b) whether these post offices have started functioning;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the time by which they are likely to be made functional?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) The number of Extra Departmental Branch Post Offices, Sub-Post Offices sanctioned during the last three years in Almora and Pithoragarh in Uttar Pradesh is 3 and 4 respectively. Details are as follows :

S. No.	Year	Number of Departmental Sub Post Offices	Number of Extra Departmental Branch Post Office	Location
1.	1993-94	-	6	*Almora* 1. Syu[illegible] 2. Chaumola *Pithoragarh* 3 Bagoti 4 Jamku 5 Duni 6 Samkot
2.	1994-95	-		Almora 1. Kota Giwai
3.	1995-96	-	-	-

(b) Yes, Sir. All have started functioning except Kota Giwai in District Almora.

(c) and (d). The Post Office at Kota Giwai has been sanctioned recently and shall be opened by 28.2.97.